



HOW TO TALK TO AN ADULT ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

If you are struggling with your mental health — for example, if you are feeling down, angry, scared, or nervous much of the time — it's important to talk with your parent or guardian or other trusted adult and let them know you need help.

Some conversations are “bigger” than others, and it's normal to feel uncertain or worried about sharing something personal or emotional. So, how do you have this conversation?

Conversation Starter:

- I am going through some things that are difficult for me to talk about. I am nervous to talk about this. I hope you will try to understand and help me figure out how to handle it.

HELPFUL TIPS:

- Plan what to say
- Write down some notes
- Give examples of what you have been feeling/experiencing
- Find a comfortable place to talk
- Explain what you are experiencing as clearly as you can
- Take breaks if you need to
- Talk about what you need
- Talk about next steps
- Keep talking to them about it after the first conversation

WHAT IF THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTIVE OR DON'T UNDERSTAND?

- Not everyone, even adults, will understand what you are telling them and/or your feelings. That is okay. Don't give up.
- Adults are not bosses of your emotions. You can feel and experience things they do not understand or agree with.
- Tell them what you have done to try to help yourself and explain you are still struggling
- Ask if they can support you getting extra help
- Ask if they will help you find supports
- If they are unable to help you, talk to another family member, a school counselor, other adult at school, or your doctor
- Keep talking to them
- Know that if you are 14 or older, you can access mental health supports on your own.



Created by Members of the State of Maine Youth System of Care Steering Committee

Libbie, Izzy, Kathryn